

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

Allowance of claims 19 to 23 and 26 to 34 and potential allowability of claims 14 to 18, 24 and 25 is gratefully acknowledged.

I Summary of the Amendments

The present patent application now comprises twenty-one (21) claims, numbered 14 to 34.

Claim 14 has been amended to be in independent form and to incorporate the features of claims 12 and 13, which have been cancelled.

Claims 24 and 25 have been amended to address objections made by the Examiner.

Claims 15, 29 and 32 have been amended to correct minor informalities detected by the Applicant upon reviewing these claims.

Previously-withdrawn claims 1 to 11 have been cancelled.

The specification has been amended to include a cross-reference to a provisional patent application from which the present patent application claims priority.

No new matter has been added to the present patent application by the present response.

II Objections to Claims 24 and 25

On page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claim 24 due to presence of the term “stabilizing” in that claim. In response, claim 24 has been amended to replace the expression “wherein said stabilizing includes” by the term “including”.

The Examiner also objected to claim 25 as he considers that a word appears to be missing after the term “including”. In response, claim 25 has been amended to replace the expression “including a protective coating from said fiber” by the expression “including depositing a protective coating on said fiber”.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner’s objections to claims 24 and 25 have been overcome and the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw these objections.

**III Rejection of Claims 12 and 13 under 35 USC 102 /
 Potential Allowability of Claim 14**

On page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 12 and 13 under 35 USC 102(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,377,727 to Dariotis *et al.*

The Examiner’s rejection is moot in view of cancellation of claims 12 and 13.

Now, the Examiner indicated that claim 14 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of its base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 14 has been amended to be in independent form and to incorporate the features of claims 12 and 13.

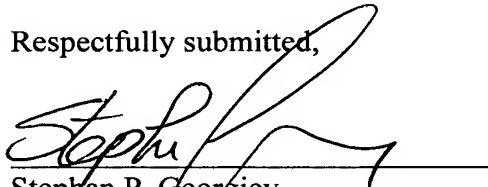
Accordingly, claim 14 is believed to be in condition for allowance. Furthermore, since claims 15 to 18 depend on claim 14, claims 15 to 18 are also believed to be in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

Allowance of claims 19 to 23 and 26 to 34 is gratefully acknowledged. The Applicant respectfully submits that claims 14 to 18 are also in condition for allowance. Favourable reconsideration is requested. Early allowance of the present patent application is earnestly solicited.

If the present patent application is not considered to be in full condition for allowance, for any reason, the Applicant respectfully requests the constructive assistance and suggestions of the Examiner in drafting one or more acceptable claims pursuant to MPEP 707.07(j) or in making constructive suggestions pursuant to MPEP 706.03 so that the application can be placed in allowable condition as soon as possible and without the need for further proceedings.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephan P. Georgiev
Agent for the Applicant
Reg. No. 37,563

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SMART & BIGGAR
1000 De La Gauchetière Street West
Suite 3300
Montreal, Quebec, H3B 4W5
CANADA
Telephone: (514) 954-1500
Facsimile: (514) 954-1396